

THE LOST WORD

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Logologists everywhere were long enamored of the word SUBBOOKKEEPER. For, in simple compact form, it was not only unique in having four double letters, but also these pairs appeared one after another in magnificent progression. Unfortunately, Webster's Second, where the word appeared, has been superseded by Webster's Third, where the word is not. And so SUBBOOKKEEPER has been tossed on the junkpile of obsolete words.

It has now been ten years since this unfortunate and cutting event. Yet no one has risen to protest or to offer a new champion. Why? Does no one care? Is the problem of multiple duplicities too difficult?

There still exist a number of words in Webster's Third having three double letters. But as far as I know there is no fourer! If Webster's is so callous as to deny us a fourer, we shall invent one.

BOOKKEEPER is still a legitimate word. And EDITOR does have the related SUBEDITOR. May not we reconstruct SUBBOOKKEEPER by analogy? No. Our analogy is faulty. A SUBEDITOR is under an EDITOR. Modern society demands we not downgrade the people at the bottom, but rather elevate them. Thus the poor BOOKKEEPER must go up, not down, and we coin only the useless SUPRABOOKKEEPER.

In Webster's Third, however, we find ROOM. A room used in summer is a SUMMERROOM. Someone who shares a room is a ROOMMATE. Hence, is it not reasonable that someone who shares a room used in summer is truly a SUMMERROOMMATE?

We also find a person without a mate is MATELESS. Therefore, if one has no one to share a room used in summer, he is SUMMERROOMMATELESS.

Even further, if one is in a state of less, he has LESSNESS. And so someone in a state of not having one to share a room used in summer has SUMMERROOMMATELESSNESS! A new plateau of six double

letters, all based on Webster's Third!

Our joy is soon shattered when we realize, by the same line of reasoning, we may construct COFFEEWEEDHOOKLESSNESS from coffee, coffeeweed, weedhook, hookless and lessness. And, it is completely disintegrated by COFFEEWOODCREEPERLESSNESS, from coffee, coffeewood, woodcreeper, creeperless, and lessness.

Therefore, we ask Webster's, can't you sneak back into the Unabridged our old favorite SUBBOOKKEEPER? Please?

QUERY

PACK MY BOX WITH FIVE DOZEN LIQUOR JUGS is an understandable sentence of 32 letters containing all 26 letters of the alphabet, the 6 extra letters being vowels. This can be conveniently termed a consonantal pangram. What is the shortest and best double consonantal pangram -- that is, a sentence using all alphabetical letters twice, with any extra letters being vowels? The only example I know of is the 71-letter sentence A PLUMP WENCH FLAGGED A ZANZIBAR KAYAK TO QUERY A VIVID CHIEF SQUAW ABOUT JUJU MAXIXES, found in John G. Fuller's Games For Insomniacs (Doubleday, 1966).